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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4494
INFO CINCPAC

S E C R E T SAIGON 2970

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EXDIS

REF: A. SAIGON 2964
B. SAIGON 2945

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>Wan J. J. J.</u>	DATE <u>10/6/81</u>
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE	
TS AUTH.	REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐	
DECLASSIFIED ☒ RELEASABLE ☒	
RELEASE DENIED ☐	
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS	

1. EMBOFF MET WITH TRAN VAN HUONG AFTERNOON AUGUST 12 AT HUONG'S REQUEST. HUONG BEGAN BY SAYING THAT HE HAD KEPT HIS WORD AND THE CANDIDATES WILL REOPEN THE CAMPAIGN. THERE WAS MUCH OPPOSITION TO THIS COURSE AMONG THE CANDIDATES AND HE HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PERSUADING THEM. HUONG OBSERVED WITH A WRY SMILE THAT THE EFFORT HAD LEFT HIM SO TIRED THAT HE FELT SICK. IF ANYONE ELSE HAD CHANGED COURSE AND ARGUED AS HE DID, THE OTHER CANDIDATES WOULD HAVE SUSPECTED HIM OF HAVING SOLD OUT TO THE GOVERNMENT; HOWEVER, THE OTHER CANDIDATES KNOW

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THAT HE IS A MAN WHO ACTS ONLY OUT OF CONVICTION.

2. HUONG CONTINUED BY NOTING THAT THE CANDIDATES HAVE SEVERAL "CONDITIONS" WHICH THEY INTEND TO PUT FORWARD TO THE SPECIAL COMMISSARIAT FOR ADMINISTRATION (THEIR COMMUNIQUE MENTIONS NO CONDITION). THESE ARE:

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(A) THE CANDIDATES WANT TO USE CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT FROM AIR VIET NAM, NOT MILITARY AIRCRAFT, IN THEIR FUTURE VISITS TO THE PROVINCES. ASKED IF THIS MEANS THAT THE CANDIDATES WANT TO GO ONLY TO PLACES SERVED BY AIR VIET NAM, HUONG SAID YES BUT SEEMED RATHER UNCERTAIN. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE CANDIDATES ARE PREPARED TO PAY THEIR OWN FARES.

(B) MEETINGS WITH VOTERS MUST BE IN LARGE, OPEN AREAS, NOT IN CONSTRICTED PLACES SUCH AS THEATERS. THIS WILL PREVENT THE GOVERNMENT FROM PACKING THE AUDIENCE WITH THIEU-KY SUPPORTERS.

(C) THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING ORDER AND INSURING SECURITY AT THE PUBLIC MEETINGS. THE GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE ADEQUATE SECURITY FOR THE CANDIDATES AT ALL TIMES.

(D) SUCH FACILITIES AND ACTIONS AS ARE REQUIRED FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ORGANIZING MEETINGS MUST BE PROVIDED. THIS INCLUDES SUCH THINGS AS GATHERING THE PEOPLE, PROVIDING

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PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS, AND ARRANGING FOR THE CANDIDATES MEALS AND SLEEPING QUARTERS.

3. HUONG THEN OBSERVED THAT HE IS ONLY STAYING IN THE RACE IN ORDER TO SERVE THE PEOPLE. HE IS SURE THAT HE WILL LOSE. THIS IS BECAUSE OF THE UNFAIR TACTICS OF THIEU-KY AND THE PRESSURES BEING PUT ON HIS CAMPAIGN WORKERS. IT IS ALSO DUE TO A SHORTAGE OF FUNDS. IF THE ELECTION WERE HONEST, HE WOULD WIN, BUT AS THINGS NOW STAND THERE IS NO HOPE OF WINNING. NEVERTHELESS HE WILL CONTINUE IN THE RACE UNTIL THE END. EMBOFF SAID HE SAW NO REASON TO DESPAIR AT THIS TIME, ASKED FOR DETAILED LIST OF PRESSURES AND THREATS WHICH VO LONG TRIEU HAD ONCE SAID HE WAS PREPARING. HUONG NODDED, THEN RESPONDED BY ASKING IF THE EMBASSY WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO MAKE SURE THE ELECTIONS ARE HONEST. EMBOFF ASSURED HIM THAT THE EMBASSY IS ALREADY DOING EVERYTHING THAT IS PROPER, BUT THAT OUR INFLUENCE OVER EVENTS HERE IS LIMITED.

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4. HUONG SAID HE HAD KEPT HIS PROMISE, THE CANDIDATES HAD SHOWN THEIR GOOD WILL, AND HE NOW HOPES THAT THE EMBASSY WILL USE ITS INFLUENCE TO CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT TO MEET THE CANDIDATES' CONDITIONS (PARA 2 ABOVE). EMBOFF SAID THAT HE

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COULD MAKE NO PROMISES, BUT THAT THE CONDITIONS SEEMED REASONABLE, AND THE EMBASSY WILL CERTAINLY URGE A REASONABLE COMPROMISE ON ALL CONCERNED.

5. HUONG WAS VERY CRITICAL OF KY, SAYING HE ABSOLUTELY CANNOT BE TRUSTED. THIEU, HOWEVER, ACTS IN GOOD FAITH. HUONG NOW SUSPECTS THAT KY AND PHAN KHAC SUU ARE WORKING TOGETHER. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE INFORMATION THAT SUU WENT TO QUANG TRI ON AUGUST 6 AND MET WITH VOTERS THERE. SUU ALLEGEDLY TRAVELED ON A GOVERNMENT PROVIDED AIRCRAFT. HUONG THINKS THAT KY'S INTENTION IS TO USE HIS APPARATUS TO THROW THE ELECTION TO SUU, WITH THE EXPECTATION OF BECOMING SUU'S PRIME MINISTER.

6. COMMENT: (A) WE DO YET NOT HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF HUONG'S ACCOUNT OF TODAY'S MEETING OF THE CANDIDATES. HIS VERSION THEREFORE MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY ACCURATE, THOUGH WE HAVE NO CONTRARY INFORMATION.

(B) HUONG'S "CONDITIONS" SEEM REASONABLE, AND WE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE KNOWN ITS READINESS TO MEET THEM.

(C) ALTHOUGH WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF THE ALLEGED KY-SUU DEAL, IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT SUU'S COMMENTS THIS MORNING (REF B) AND HIS RECENT VISIT TO I CORPS DO RAISE SOME QUESTIONS IN OUR MINDS AS WELL.

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IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE THAT SUU IS ACCEPTING SPECIAL FAVORS FROM THE GOV. THE GOVERNMENT MOTIVE WOULD BE TO DRAW VOTES AWAY

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FROM HUONG. SUU MIGHT HAVE SOME PROMISES FROM KY ABOUT A FUTURE GOVERNMENT POSITION IN A THIEU-KY GOVERNMENT, BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT SUU MERELY WANTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY CHANCE OF GETTING VOTES BY WHATEVER MEANS.

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